

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 MANILA 07403 060353Z
ACTION SS-25

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EXDIS

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, RP
SUBJECT: THE CARDINAL SAYS FAREWELL

REF: MANILA 6164

1. AT FAREWELL DINNER MAY 5 CARDINAL SIN TOLD ME PLAINLY THAT WHILE HE WORKS AND PRAYS FOR THE REFORM OF THE MARCOS REGIME HE HAS LITTLE HOPE THAT IT WILL OCCUR OWING TO MARCOS' DEPENDENCE UPON MARTIAL LAW FOR POLITICAL SURVIVAL AND MATERIAL POSSESSIONS. SIN FEARS COMMUNISM MAY BE THE ALTERNATIVE TO MARCOS OR EVEN THAT MARCOS COULD HIMSELF EMBRACE COMMUNISM TO STAY IN POWER. HE WORRIES THAT THE PERPETRATION OF THE MARCOS REGIME UNDER CURRENT CONDITIONS DRIVES MODERATES TOWARD THE RADICAL EXTREME. HE SEES NO WAY OUT AT THIS TIME OTHER THAN "AN ACT OF GOD." WHATEVER MAY COME HE BELIEVES THE PHILIPPINE PEOPLE WANT AND NEED A STRONG AMERICAN CONNECTION.

2. REFERRING TO HIS MEETING MAY 3 WITH VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE, THE CARDINAL SAID HE HOPED THAT HIS PLEA THAT THE UNITED STATES NOT ABANDON THE PHILIPPINES HAD BEEN RECEIVED BY THE VICE PRESIDENT. I REPLIED THAT THE MESSAGE HAD REGISTERED CLEARLY AND IT LIKELY WOULD BE A PRINCIPAL IMPRESSION FROM THE VISIT. REFERRING TO SIN'S COM-

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PLAINT TO THE VICE PRESIDENT ABOUT U.S. SUPPORT THROUGH AID OF STERILIZATION AND ABORTION, I OFFERED TO HAVE OUR AID STAFF MEET WITH THE CARDINAL'S REPRESENTATIVES TO DISCUSS U.S. AID SUPPORT TO FAMILY PLANNING IN THE PHILIPPINES, AND TO HEAR AND CONSIDER CHURCH CONCERNS. THIS PLEASED SIN AND HE READILY AGREED TO SUCH A DIALOGUE IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

3. THE CARDINAL SAID THAT MRS. MARCOS HAD INVITED ALL 500 PRIESTS IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF MANILA TO MALACANANG PALACE FOR A GENERAL DISCUSSION MAY 4. APPARENTLY THERE WAS LITTLE ENTHUSIASM FOR THE ENCOUNTER AMONG THE PRIESTS, BUT SIN HAD ENCOURAGED FIFTY OF THE MORE ARTICULATE PRIESTS TO ACCEPT, ADMONISHING THEM: "BE CANDID, FOR YOU SPEAK WITH THE VOICE OF PROPHETS; BE COURTEOUS, FOR YOU ARE MODELS OF DEPORTMENT; AND DRINK A BEER BEFOREHAND TO LOOSEN YOUR TONGUES." ACCORDING TO SIN, THE DISCUSSION HAD INDEED BEEN CANDID, INCLUDING SUCH SUBJECTS AS MARTIAL LAW, ELECTORAL FRAUD, AND TORTURE. THE PRIESTS WERE PLEASED, ALTHOUGH MRS. MARCOS SEEMED ON THE VERGE OF TEARS. SIN ADDED THAT HE HAS COMPLETED COMPILATION OF A VAST RECORD OF BALLOTING ABUSE FROM THE APRIL 7 ELECTION AND WILL BE ISSUING A REPORT VERY SOON. (IT WAS NOT CLEAR IF THIS REPORT WOULD BE MADE PUBLIC OR BE PROVIDED ONLY TO THE ELECTIONS COMMISSION.)

4. THE CARDINAL ALLUDED TO PHILIPPINE SENTIMENTS IN FAVOR OF STATEHOOD OR SOME FORM OF PERMANENT ASSOCIATION WITH THE UNITED STATES, INQUIRED ABOUT THE STATUS OF GUAM, AND WENT SO FAR AS TO SUGGEST THAT A FORMAL LEGAL ASSOCIATION WITH THE U.S. MIGHT BE THE BEST SOLUTION TO THE POLITICAL DILEMMA OF THE PHILIPPINES. (WHILE HE MAY HAVE BEEN TESTING ME, I BELIEVE THIS SUGGESTION CAN BETTER BE UNDERSTOOD AS AN INDEX OF DESPERATION IN THE FACE OF WHAT HE APPARENTLY FEARS MAY BE AN IMPENDING PHILIPPINE TRAGEDY.) I REPLIED
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THAT IN MY VIEW SUCH A "SOLUTION" COULD NOT AND SHOULD NOT BE, FOR IT IS THE FILIPINOS THEMSELVES WHO MUST FIND THEIR OWN SOLUTIONS IN THEIR OWN WAY RATHER THAN AS AN APPENDAGE NATION.

5. THE CARDINAL SPOKE OF PRESIDENT MARCOS, AS HE HAS DONE BEFORE, AS A BRILLIANT, EXPERIENCED LEADER FATALLY FLAVORED BY AMORALITY AND CUPIDITY. A MAN WHO BOLDLY MOUNTED THE TIGER AND HAVING RIDDEN WELL YET CANNOT SAFELY DISMOUNT EVEN IF HE WISHED. "THE END OF MARTIAL LAW WOULD KILL HIM. AND WHAT ABOUT HIS VAST MATERIAL ACQUISITIONS; HOW ELSE COULD HE RETAIN ALL THAT?" THE CARDINAL, WHO OFTEN MAKES HIS POINT WITH HUMOR, ADDED, "WITH MARCOS MINING IS THE BIGGEST INDUSTRY IN THE PHILIPPINES: THIS IS MINE; THAT IS MINE; THE OTHER IS MINE."

6. THE CARDINAL HAS MANY LEVELS OF CANDOR--ON THE ROSTRUM, IN A GROUP, WITH THE VICE PRESIDENT, ALONE WITH A FRIEND. HE IS SPEAKING OUT MORE THESE DAYS. THE TETE-A-TETE REPORTED ABOVE COMES CLOSE TO SAYING, "THE PHILIPPINES IS HEADING FOR A DISASTER WHICH ONLY AN ACT OF GOD CAN AVERT." I DID NOT PROBE AS TO WHEN THAT DISASTER MIGHT BE EXPECTED

TO STRIKE LEST ANY SUCH INQUIRY BE MISUNDERSTOOD.

7. AT THE END OF MY TOUR OF DUTY, I BELIEVE WE WOULD BE
WELL ADVISED TO PREPARE FOR MAJOR POLITICAL CHANGE IN THE
PHILIPPINES WITHIN THREE YEARS.

8. WHEN WE PARTED THE CARDINAL SAID, "LEE, LET US PRAY FOR
EACH OTHER." AMEN. STULL

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